Integrity Matters

Ontario

providing information on regulatory matters to the general public and Ontario Racing Commission clients *Fall 2006*

THE WELFARE OF THE HORSE

Medication Control:

Good for the horse. Vital to the horse racing community And here to stay

The Ontario Racing Commission (ORC) recognizes that the health and well being of the horse is of paramount concern to the racing community.

It also recognizes that the future growth and vitality of the industry is dependent on everyone in the industry working collectively for future growth, and in maintaining integrity.

"The integrity of the sport is the key to its success," says John Blakney, Executive Director of the ORC. "The future is dependent on all racing fans, as well as the general public, having full and complete confidence in the fairness of the racing experience.

Everyone in the community has a collective responsibility to add 'value' to that experience."

For example, the ORC's testing and regulatory efforts *add value* by contributing to a fair and equitable venue for the horse people to race their horses for purses and of course for the betting public.

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Research into Racehorse Breakdowns

Examines Canon Bone Fractures in 2 and 3 Year Olds

Researchers at the University of Guelph are concluding a major project examining horses from the ORC Death Registry who had suffered catastrophic breakdowns. Dr. Antonio Cruz and his research group made an extensive study of the major joints of these horses but due to time and space constraints - focused on the canon bone and fetlock.

This initial research report only deals with thoroughbreds (it is expected that the standardbred information will follow shortly). But their findings are quite striking: 41% of thoroughbred horses have significant enough subchondral bone damage that they are at risk of having

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Ontario
Racing
Commission

10 Carlson Court
Suite 400
Toronto, ON M9W 6L2

Publication Mail 1680563

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

"PROUD TO SERVE"

This is my final opportunity to write to you as your Chair. I have been proud to have been part of an organization that serves the public and the industry so effectively and with professionalism at every level. What lies ahead for the Commission and for the horse racing industry?

Those of you that know me, know that I have many passionate views. I'd like to leave you with a comment on two of those views.

First, the Commission must be responsive to, and must make change happen. It must be able to change itself and the rules and programs it is responsible for, and to do so quickly.

But it cannot operate independently. The Commission needs the industry's support to make change happen in a positive way.

Some prefer quick fixes, saying "the Commission should just go ahead and ..." The difficulty is that "just go[ing] ahead" usually makes someone in the industry angry so they try to stop the change or distract everyone with complaints about the Commission acting unilaterally. Some in the industry oppose any change, especially if it comes from the Commission. But that is not the solution.

As an example of needed change, I offer my second comment: I believe there has to be change in the two-year old OSS Divisions. I have been at the tracks watching these races. There are too many breaks and the fans don't like it. You can hear it as they watch the races and see it in the wagering.

What is the solution? Longer races or shorter races? Shorter qualifying times? More qualifiers? Fewer horses? Starting the racing later in the year? Simply remove two-year old racing from the OSS program? With industry input and support, the Commission must act in a timely way. And decisively, before those disappointed fans turn away permanently.

While I may no longer play an active role, I will remain an avid fan and vocal supporter of horse racing.

Finally, let me add that it is never 'easy' being the regulator. It is demanding, and admittedly dynamic. It requires firmness and fairness. And the end goal of ensuring a vigorous industry is a worthy pursuit. Kipling's poem has a special appeal to me... *"If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs..."* I would like to thank the staff and Commissioners – past and present – for not losing theirs, and the support in helping me keep mine.

Lynda Tanaka

THANK YOU, LYNDA!

On behalf of all staff, I would like to extend the very best of wishes to our Chair, Lynda Tanaka who is coming to the end of her term. Her passion and leadership has been a valuable asset and I personally want to thank her for her support during a time of great change facing the horse racing community.

John L. Blakney
Executive Director

HOTLINE AVAILABLE TO REPORT ABUSE

Industry participants are encouraged to make the Commission aware of specific instances of neglect or abuse by using the ORC's

INTEGRITY HOTLINE:
1-877-ONT-RACE (1-877-668-7223)

The Hotline does not require an individual to leave a name, nor will an individual be forced to testify.

ORC COMMITTED TO INDUSTRY SUPPORT

The Ontario Racing Commission supports the health and welfare of the horse racing community through its regulatory and program services.

NEW DIRECTOR NAMED

To signal its commitment in this area, the ORC recently named Wendy Hoogeveen to the new position of Director of Industry Development and Support. The position holds responsibility for the Horse Improvement Program (HIP), including the Ontario Sires Stakes, as well as overseeing the development of an Industry Development Plan for the Quarter Horse Industry in Ontario. Having worked at the ORC for more than 20 years, Wendy brings a wealth of experience and understanding of the industry to the new position. Included in her responsibilities will be racetrack licensing and overseeing the race date allocation process for the industry.

"The ORC is made up of staff and members who are very committed to the well-being of the horse racing community", says John Blakney, Executive Director. "This internal re-organization signals a shift in our internal focus and better positions the ORC to add value."

REVIEW OF HIP HAS STARTED

Recognized worldwide as one of the best jurisdictional programs, HIP has been operating for almost 40 years. Recent successes of Ontario-bred horses, such as Majestic Son and Mr Feelgood, are demonstrations of the quality coming out of the Ontario program. The ORC recognizes the challenge to do even better and is committed to conducting a review of the Horse Improvement Program.

The ORC recently issued a Request for Proposal for an in-depth review of all aspects of the program. An Industry Advisory Group has been appointed by the Executive Director and will assist in guiding the process. Input will be solicited from the horse racing community for both long term and short term solutions to continue to build the industry, with some specific changes for the fall of 2007. If you wish to have input, please check both the ORC and industry websites for developments.

ONTARIO QUARTER HORSE INDUSTRY PLAN APPROVED

In a separate initiative, the ORC has been working very closely with the local Ontario Quarter Horse Industry in the development of the Quarter Horse Racing Industry Development Program. Through the Site Holder Agreement between the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation and the owners of the Ajax Downs Racetrack, the ORC was assigned responsibility for the planning, development and administration of funds from the slot revenue generated at the track for the industry. An industry-wide plan was developed to ensure economic benefit for the Ontario economy. Revenue to the program began in March 2005 with the opening of the slot facility at Ajax Downs.

Working with key industry representatives for more than a year, the seven year plan was developed and then circulated through a Public Consultation Process to the broader industry for input over the summer 2006. The final report incorporates the public input and was approved by the Board at its meeting in October 2006. The Plan (available on the ORC website) provides the structure and the guiding principles for the creation of programs to include:

- Racing
- Breeding
- Industry Participation
- Education and Accreditation
- Wagering Expansion
- Infrastructure Development

Under the Plan, the Board has now approved the 2007 Racing and Breeding Programs, amounting to $3.1 million in the form of purses, breeders' awards and incentive programs. Work continues in the areas of building of a Program Accreditation Registry, education and marketing.

HORSE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Since 1968, the Horse Improvement Program has provided funds to encourage the development of Ontario horse racing and breeding industry:

- Overnight purses
- Stakes Supplements
- Equine Research
- Breeders and Owners Awards
- Ontario Sires Stakes

While the ORC has had oversight of the program since its inception, HIP was transferred to the industry in 1996 at the time of the pari-mutuel tax break. In 2005, the Commission re-assumed responsibility for the management and administration of HIP at the request of the industry.

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The racing industry in Ontario is one of the most open, closely monitored, and regulated sports in the country. Regrettably, the use of illegal and non-therapeutic drugs by a small group of individuals has been on the increase.

He points out that the ORC – with the support of the industry – is taking active steps to end these unfair practices.

"By far the majority of those licensed in the horse racing community conducts their business and cares for the horse with professionalism and abides by the rules. In addition to new and vigilant testing programs, we believe that a well-managed program of medication control supported by all those involved in the racing industry will play a key role in maintaining fair play."

Equine Medication Control Task Force

Driven by industry trends and concerns, in June of this year a Task Force was established to combat unfair and illegal medication practices. "I felt it was important to get industry input and advice," says the Executive Director. He says an Advisory Group will examine policy and standards, help determine areas where action is required, and assist in securing the necessary resources.

"I'm grateful to these key individuals, representing a cross section of owners, horse people, veterinary, research, and racetracks, for agreeing to serve." People making up the Group include: Marv Chantler, Conrad Cohen, Dr. Moira Gunn, DVM, David Liston, Hugh Mitchell, Jim Whelan, and David Willmot.

WHAT EXACTLY IS MEDICATION CONTROL?

Simply stated, medication control means only using medications or products that have a therapeutic value to the horse. When used prior to a race, they should not mask an underlying health problem, cause a positive test, or undermine the testing process.

It also means:

- Therapeutic medications are an integral part of maintaining the health of the horse; it is unethical to give non-therapeutic drugs to a horse at any time;
- The use of medications or products that are not properly prescribed may not be in the best interest of the horse;
- Medications or products that have no label, or are labeled in a suspicious way (e.g. "home made" label), or have no manufacturer's name, should never be used;
- Medications or products that are offered at significantly reduced prices should be used with caution, as they could be outdated, or even bogus.

Integrity Matters

A publication of the Ontario Racing Commission, the provincial agency which governs, directs and controls horse racing in any or all its forms in the Province of Ontario.

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John Blakney ..... Executive Director and CEO

Ontario Racing Commission
10 Carlson Court, Suite 400
Toronto, Ontario M9W 6L2

P: (416) 213-0520
ontarioracingcommission.ca

L'information dans ce document est disponible en française

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Research cont'd from pg 1

a catastrophic breakdown. The subchondral bone is located immediately below the joint cartilage.

The researchers also found that 40% of horses had fetlock joint disease, much of which would require some intervention in order for the horse to race.

Research into Racehorse Breakdowns

To carry out this study, the researchers performed three different analyses on the involved bones:

Qualitative Ultrasound (QUS) – this is a non-invasive assessment of bone quality determined by measuring the speed of sound along the outside of the canon bone. In simple terms, the speed of sound is faster in well developed normal bone and drops as the bone becomes more porous and disorganized.

Micro-CT – micro-computerized thermography is a three dimensional x-ray system with the ability to see very minute structures in bone.

Dissection and documentation – of the pathology of all the major joints from these cases.

The QUS technique could be used as a means to identify horses at risk. It can be used in standing, non-sedated horses and takes approximately one minute per examined site. Nervous horses may require light sedation.

Standardbred findings will be shared as soon as they are available. As well, the rest of the study is looking at background information to these cases, such as exercise intensity, speed and frequency of works (prior to injury), age, sex and track conditions.

For more information on the study, contact **Dr Antonio Cruz,** Ontario Veterinary College, University of Guelph, Guelph ON N1G 2W1 519-823-8840.